

Message Text

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61

ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6663

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14642

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, LA

SUBJ: BRIEFING BY AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE OF SENIOR RTG OFFICIALS

1. ON SEPTEMBER 9 AMBASSADOR KINTNER HOSTED A LUNCHEON AT WHICH AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE DISCUSSED WITH SENIOR RTG OFFICIALS THE LAOTIAN SITUATION AND ASPECTS OF THAI-LAO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE GENESIS OF THE LUNCHEON WAS A CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR KINTNER AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN WHO SUGGESTED THE VALUE OF AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE DISCUSSING THAI-LAO RELATIONS WITH KEY POLICY LEVEL OFFICIALS OF THE RTG WHOSE BUREAUCRACIES AFFECT RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND LAOS. THIS WAS ONE FURTHER STEP IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' (MFA) EFFORTS TO MAKE OTHER RTG ENTITIES AWARE OF HOW THE LAO REGARD THE THAI AND TO BETTER THAI-LAO RELATIONS. ATTENDING FOR THE THAI WERE THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE, AND GENERAL KRIANGSAK OF SUPREME COMMAND.

2. AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS INCLUDING PROSPECTS FOR THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, PATHET LAO PREOCCUPATION WITH THE RIGHTIST COUP, AND LAO DISTRUST OF THE THAI. HE POINTED TO LAO INTENT TO OPEN ANOTHER ACCESS TO THE SEA BESIDES THE EXISTING ROUTE THROUGH
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THAILAND, TACTFULLY MENTIONED LAO RESENTMENT OVER

SUCH THINGS AS BEING SERVICED BY DOMESTIC THAI AIRWAYS RATHER THAN THAI INTERNATIONAL. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS AND PATHET LAO TO THAILAND FROM LAOS, AND ARMS SMUGGLING.

3. AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE TO LAOS, FOR THE TIME BEING, OF THE UDORN MAINTENANCE FACILITY AND THE TRAINING OF SOME LAO MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THAILAND. HE URGED STRONGLY THAT TRAINING SHOULD CONTINUE AS IN THE PAST WITHOUT THE RTG REQUIRING A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE LAO GOVERNMENT, SINCE SUCH A REQUEST WOULD SURELY BE BLOCKED BY THE PATHET LAO. WITH RESPECT TO AID TO LAOS, AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE SUGGESTED THE BEST FORM OF ASSISTANCE THE THAI MIGHT RENDER WOULD BE EDUCATIONAL AID, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORM OF INCREASED SCHOLARSHIPS.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ASKED AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE IF HE SHOULD VISIT LAOS AND WAS ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WOULD BE SEEING PHOUMI VONVICHIT IN NEW YORK AND WOULD BE DISCUSSING WITH HIM WAYS TO IMPROVE THAI-LAO RELATIONS. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE THE RTG PLACES ON THIS.

5. COMMENT: THE MFA HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO IMPROVE THAI-LAO RELATIONS AND TO EDUCATE OTHER THAI AGENCIES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO LAOS. A MINISTERIAL LEVEL COMMITTEE HAS BEEN FORMED FOR THIS PURPOSE AND AN INVITATION HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO THE LAO GOVERNMENT TO APPOINT A GROUP TO MEET WITH THE THAI. THE DAY AFTER THE LUNCHEON, AN MFA OFFICIAL TOLD THE ACTING CHIEF OF THE POLITICAL SECTION THE THAI WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY SEND A DELEGATION TO VIENTIANE, SINCE THEY BELIEVE SUCH A MEETING IMPORTANT AND BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND PATHET LAO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' SENSITIVITY TO VISITING THAILAND. THE THAI WERE EXCEPTIONALLY RESPONSIVE TO AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE'S EXCELLENT PRESENTATION. A MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION IS BEING POUCHED TO EA/TB.
KINTNER

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